

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend Claims 1, 2, 6, 7 and 8 to read as follows.

1. (Currently Amended) An encoding apparatus for packetizing variable-length encoding data using by a packet format in which a header of a packet has an area indicating the length of the packet and the range of values indicating the packet length is limited, comprising:

- a) inputting input means for inputting variable-length encoding image data which includes a picture header indicating the start of one picture;
- b) header detecting detection means for detecting the picture header input by said inputting means;
- c) data length detecting means for detecting whether a data length of image data for one picture input by said inputting means reaches a predetermined value,
wherein the predetermined value is less than or equal to a maximum value of the packet length which can be specified in the header of the variable-length encoding data; and
- d) packetizing means for packetizing the variable-length packetizing the variable-length encoding image data in accordance with according to the output of said header detecting detection means and said data length detecting means such that the packet length is set within the maximum value which can be specified in the header.

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Cont 2. (Currently Amended) An encoding apparatus according to Claim 1,
wherein said packetizing means generates a PES packet corresponding to data conforming to an
MPEG system from the variable-length encoding image data.

3. (Original) An encoding apparatus according to Claim 2, further
comprising second packetizing means for applying second packetization to packet data
packetized by said packetizing means, by a predetermined data length.

4. (Original) An encoding apparatus according to Claim 3, wherein a
packet generated by said second packetizing means is a TS packet.

5. (Original) An encoding apparatus according to Claim 4, further
comprising pickup means for capturing an image of an object and for generating image data; and
encoding means for applying variable-length encoding to the image data.

6. (Currently Amended) An encoding apparatus according to Claim 1,
further comprising recording means for recording the variable-length encoding image data
A/B packetized by said packetizing means into a recording medium.

7. (Currently Amended) An encoding method for packetizing
B variable-length encoding data by using a packet format in which a header of a packet has an area
indicating the length of the packet and the range of values indicating the packet length is limited,

comprising the steps of:

inputting variable-length encoding image data which includes a picture header
indicating the start of one picture;

a first detecting step of detecting the picture header input in said inputting step;

a second detecting step of detecting the whether a data length of the

variable-length encoding data image data for one picture input in said inputting step reaches a
predetermined value, the predetermined value being less than or equal to a maximum value of the
packet length which can be specified in the header; and

variable-length packetizing the variable-length encoding image data according
to the output of a detection such that the packet length is set within the maximum value which
can be specified in the header in accordance with the results of said first and second detecting
steps.

8. (Currently Amended) A recording medium which can be read by a
computer and which records a program for packetizing variable-length encoding data by using a
packet format in which a header of a packet has an area indicating the length of the packet and
the range of values indicating the packet length is limited, the program comprising codes to
perform:

input processing for inputting variable-length encoding image data which
includes a picture header indicating the start of one picture;

first detection processing for detecting the picture header input by said input
processing;

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~~second detection processing for detecting the whether a data length of the~~
~~variable-length encoding data image data for one picture input by said input processing reaches a~~
~~predetermined value, the predetermined value being less than or equal to a maximum value of the~~
~~packet length which can be specified in the header; and~~

packetizing processing for variable-length packetizing the variable-length
encoding image data ~~according to the output of a detection such that the packet length is set~~
~~within the maximum value which can be specified in the header~~ in accordance with output of
said first and second detection processing.